

CITY OF ROCKVILLE CAMPAIGN POLICY

Revised April 2013

Resolution No.

The purpose of this campaign policy is to delineate the ground rules for City employees, the Mayor and Council, and candidates for public office to follow. This policy will be enforced by the City Manager, or the City Manager's designee, and may be changed by resolution of the Mayor and Council. The City of Rockville holds non-partisan elections for the Mayor and Council offices.

City Resources

City facilities, with the exception of City Hall, may be rented for political events, including campaign events, under the same terms and conditions as the general public, in accordance with the City's facility rental and park permit policies. Political activities, including campaigning, may be conducted at such rented or permitted facilities during the rental period.

Other City resources, including personnel, equipment, postage, City letterhead or official stationery and funding, will not be used for promotion of or opposition to any candidate for political office, political party, or slate of candidates for any office on a local, state, or national level.

This does not preclude the use of City staff and equipment in connection with the rental of City facilities in the same manner as would be available to the general public in connection with the rental of City facilities. This does not preclude use of City staff and other resources in connection with preparing election and candidate information for Rockville Reports and Rockville 11 in the manner outlined in this policy. This would also not preclude a debate or candidate forum being televised on Rockville 11 in the manner outlined in this policy nor would this prohibit the City from its lobbying efforts at the county, state and national level.

The City of Rockville seal is copyrighted and cannot be used on campaign materials.

Coverage of City of Rockville Incumbents Running for Office

Between August 1 and Election Day of each election year, incumbent members of the Mayor and Council running for office will not be featured or highlighted individually in any City communication including Rockville Reports articles and Rockville 11 programming. Regular news coverage of the Mayor and Council meetings and activities will continue from August 1 to Election Day.

Dissemination of City of Rockville Election Information

Rockville Reports, Rockville 11, www.rockvillemd.gov and City social media (for example, Facebook and Twitter) will be used to disseminate general information about City of Rockville elections, such as the election date, polling place locations and hours, and how to register to vote.

Dissemination of City of Rockville Candidate Information

Candidates for City of Rockville Mayor and Council elections are defined as persons who are certified to appear on the ballot.

City of Rockville Website – A “.gov” domain designation is granted through the Federal General Services Administration (GSA) for government websites. The following information is prohibited on “.gov” sites:

- Non-Governmental Advertisements
- Political or Campaign Information

Due to the GSA requirements for “.gov” domain sites, no candidate information will be posted to www.rockvillemd.gov.

Social Media – Social media will be used to disseminate only general election information and all candidate statements prepared for Rockville Reports and Rockville 11. There will be no promotion of individual candidates through the City’s social media, for example Facebook and Twitter. The City’s Facebook page will not accept wall postings from August 1 to Election Day of each election year.

Candidate Statements - The City of Rockville will provide all Mayor and Council candidates the opportunity for one written and one video statement per candidate to be distributed by the City of Rockville in the following ways:

Rockville Reports - One statement and one photograph (of the candidate only) for each candidate will be published in the November issue of Rockville Reports. Statements must not exceed 250 words and will not be edited except for length. Contact information, including an e-mail address, Web site, and/or phone number that are provided with the statement will be published and will not count toward the 250 word limit. All candidates must meet the City's deadline for submission in order to have this information published. These Rockville Reports candidate statements will not be posted to the online version of Rockville Reports at www.rockvillemd.gov.

Rockville 11 (cable channel) - Each candidate will be offered the opportunity to tape a statement not to exceed four minutes. Rockville 11 staff will schedule these sessions for all candidates. All statements will be filmed by Rockville 11 staff using the same background and on-screen graphics. The candidate statements will air on Rockville 11 (channel 11 on RCN, Verizon and Comcast) and will be posted on the City’s YouTube channel: cityofrockville. Candidate statements will not be posted at www.rockvillemd.gov.

Dissemination of Candidate Information for Non-City of Rockville Elections

Candidate information for any non-City of Rockville election will not be disseminated in any form by the City of Rockville.

Parades Sponsored by the City of Rockville

Individuals Permitted to Participate – Current elected officials may participate in parades sponsored by the City of Rockville, including City of Rockville, other municipal, county, state and federal elected officials.

Candidates for City of Rockville Mayor and Council offices may participate in parades if they are certified to appear on the ballot by the City's Board of Supervisors of Elections. For the Memorial Day parade, participants must be certified by May 15.

Individuals who are not elected officials and are candidates for non-City of Rockville elected office may not participate in parades sponsored by the City of Rockville.

Requirements for Parade Participants – Individuals permitted to participate in a City sponsored parade must complete a parade application and submit it to the Special Events Office. For the Memorial Day parade, an application must be submitted by May 15.

The designated parade route is defined as the street area between the curbs. Distribution of campaign materials at the parade by members of the parade unit and others must be confined to the areas outside the designated parade route.

For safety reasons, and to keep the parade moving, there will be no distribution of balloons or written literature of any kind by the current elected official, certified candidates or members of the parade unit while on the parade route. Literature may be distributed outside the parade route.

Officials, candidates and members of their parade unit who fail to follow the requirements for parade participation could be asked to step out of the parade or may not be authorized to participate in the parade in subsequent years.

Parade Vehicles and Signs - The City will provide vehicles for use in the parade only for current elected officials of the City of Rockville.

The City will provide signs for current elected officials' parade vehicles stating their name and elected office. Current elected officials who are also certified candidates for City of Rockville office will be provided signs that also state the City of Rockville office for which he/she is a candidate.

The City will provide signs for certified City of Rockville candidates not currently serving in Rockville elected office that state their name and the office they seek.

Parade participants will be offered the choice of two magnetic vehicle signs or two coroplast signs. Sign dimensions must not exceed 9" by 28". Preferred sign material and dimension must be specified in the parade application.

Special Events

An area may be set aside at City sponsored special events for booths. Certified candidates for elected office may pay a booth fee and obtain a permit to have a booth at a City sponsored special event. Candidates and supporters also may campaign at City sponsored events without a booth. Candidates and supporters may not distribute balloons at special events and any balloons used for display must be disposed of in accordance with special event guidelines. Any activity that constitutes a nuisance or disruption at a City sponsored event is prohibited. The City of Rockville will not accept sponsorships for City events from any candidate or elected official for political office, political party or slate of candidates for any office.

Campaign Materials

Campaign materials may not be left or distributed inside City facilities with the exception of materials allowed on Election Day as prescribed by the City's election laws and with the exception of materials distributed during a candidate forum or debate at a City facility rented in accordance with this policy. Campaign materials must be removed by campaign officials at the conclusion of Election Day and within two hours of a candidate forum or debate held at a City facility.

Advertisements in City Publications

The City of Rockville will not publish any advertisements in any City publications, including advertisements sponsored by, supporting or opposing any candidate or elected official for any political office or political party.

Televised Debate or Candidate Forums for City of Rockville Mayor and Council Elections

The City may televise on Rockville 11 up to, but no more than, three candidate debates or forums for the certified City of Rockville Mayor and Council candidates.

Organizations interested in hosting a televised forum must submit a request form to the City of Rockville. If more than three organizations submit a request, a random drawing will take place to select the three organizations whose forums will be televised. Televised forums will be held after the candidate filing deadline for Mayor and Council elected office.

The City televised debates or forums may be held at a City facility, with the exception of City Hall. The debates or forums will be broadcast on Channel 11 and online at www.youtube.com/cityofrockville. The hosting organization will coordinate with Rockville 11 staff on the availability of production schedule, on-air program schedule, personnel, equipment and other resources.

City staff must not be involved in any way in the hosting, moderating, facilitating, or asking of questions. Staff involvement is limited to the random selection of forum host organizations

(when more than three organizations submit requests), coordination of date and location and television production.

For all forums or debates televised on Rockville 11:

- All candidates appearing on the ballot must be invited to participate
- Mayoral candidates and Council candidates must debate separately
- The forum or debate must be sponsored/hosted by an independent, non-partisan organization that does not endorse candidates (such as the League of Women Voters) and focuses on citywide issues.